



2016 DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE Andres Aguirre

It is my pleasure and honor to introduce the Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) 2016 Annual Report - Working in Washington. This year's report is a combination of customer success stories alternating with

program information in the traditional calendar format. I hope this report provides a window into the work performed by DVR staff and the stories regarding the Customers' challenging journies to employment provide inspiration for you.

DVR continued to focus on implementing the changes associated with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). We successfully implemented changes associated with increasing timeliness of services - developing Individualized Plans for Employment within 90 days. This past year, staff developed over 92% of IPE's within the new timeline. Staff members are very engaged with providing timely services.

DVR staff continued to achieve employment outcomes - DVR had over 3,000 successful rehabilitations last Federal Fiscal Year, and develop solid IPE's as evident by the over 64% Rehab Rate. While Rehabs and the Rehab Rate are not reported to the Rehabilitation Services Administration, I occasionally look at them to get a glance at how effective staff are at helping customers. As we move forward, I am very excited to incorporate the common measures: Employment after exiting after 2 quarters, employment after exiting after 4 quarters, certificate attainment, skills progression, etc.

I wish all the information I provided in this report were positive but, sadly, such is not the case. In March, Marcia Law was hit by a vehicle on her way to catch the bus to work. The injuries she suffered were too severe and she passed away. This was a great loss to DVR and the SeaTac office. Marcia was a dedicated employee and good friend to her co-workers. She is sadly missed.

In closing, I appreciate all of the hard work and dedication DVR staff members demonstrated over the past year. Staff are providing services to customers facing numerous and complex barriers, all the while dealing with the unknown changes coming as a results of WIOA. Their ability to focus on their work is exceptional. In addition, I thank the many partners we work with on a regular basis- Native American Vocational Rehabilitation programs, Community Rehabilitation Programs, businesses, and many others who work with us to help individuals with disabilities achieve a more independent and self-sufficient life though work. Together we transform lives.

Washington State Rehabilitation Council

www.wsrcwa.org

The Washington State Rehabilitation Council

(WSRC) works to ensure that every individual with a disability receives services and support they need to achieve meaningful employment, build financial security, and to do well in life.

To ensure the voices of individuals with disabilities are considered, the WSRC reviews, analyzes, and advises DVR on changes to customer service policies and practices, and monitors DVR performance and outcomes. It works to strengthen partnerships with disability and employment partners to improve opportunities for individuals.



Washington State Rehabilitation Council Building Inroads to Employment and Success

Council Members

Advocacy Representative Vacant

Business RepresentativeKathy Powers
Kelly Boston
Erin Williams

Client Assistance Program (CAP) Representative Jerry Johnsen

Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Representative
Shannon McLain

DVR Field Staff Representative (Ex-Officio)
Josephine Ko

DVR Director (Ex-Officio) Andres Aguirre

Labor RepresentativePhilip Bradford

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Representative Vacant

Parent Training Representative Rosslyn Bethmann

Recipient of DVR ServicesJustin Poole
Deborah Boudreau

Tribal VR Representative Vacant

Washington State Independent Living Council (WASILC) Representative Krista Van Woert

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB) Representative

Erica Hansen

DVR'S PURPOSE

To empower individuals with disabilities to achieve a greater quality of life by obtaining and maintaining employment.



"We want our workforce to reflect the face of the community and in order to do so we must be welcoming to individuals with varied abilities."

Lowe's Store Manager, Matthias Lieb



Lowe's Home Improvement – Successfully leading the way

When you think of gardening, plumbing, electrical and supplies you often think of your local hardware store or the Lowe's down the street. One usually does not think of a big box hardware store as an agent of change but Lowe's store 252 located in North Seattle is just that. They are successfully leading the way in integrating their workforce.

Under the direction of Store Manager Matthias Lieb and Human Resource Manager Maria Guzman they have hired over 17 individuals with disabilities since 2014 and are always looking for more good associates to join their team. Their philosophy, as stated by Matthias, is that "we want our workforce to reflect the face of the community and in order to do so we must be welcoming to individuals with varied abilities." These efforts have not always been easy. It's required a culture change where everyone involved embraces and values the differences and unique contributions of each team member. This success has been realized by using a number of approaches

including using natural supports, job coaching and effective accommodations as well as building a successful partnership with DVR's Business Specialist Brent Masters with the North Seattle office. In the last 2-1/2 years, Brent and Maria have successfully guided 13 people to work with equal pay, benefits, promotions and even an employee of the month.

Building a diverse workforce is a commitment that at times can be challenging. When situations arise, DVR works in close partnership with Lowe's to develop creative solutions to challenging problems and remains involved and committed to both the employer and the employee. It is this type of mutual vision and commitment that is transforming the workplace for all employees.



DVR works in close partnership with Lowe's to develop creative solutions to challenging problems.

January 2017



Colleen came to DVR to get assistance with employment. Her disability impacts the way she processes information and communicates with others, so she wanted to find a job that was a good fit for her skills and abilities. She also wanted extra support with applying for jobs and training once she secured a position.

When Colleen was in school, she participated in work experiences through the VOICE program, but hadn't worked in a paid capacity since then. Through meetings with her DVR counselor, they were able to identify skills that she possessed from life experiences. For many years she assisted her mom in taking care of a family member's household needs. Colleen's responsibilities included sweeping floors, wiping down counters, caring for a cat, hand washing the dishes, taking out the garbage, and prepping clothes for the next day. She also helped out at home by doing the laundry, unloading the dishwasher, walking the dog, recycling, and completing data entry tasks. Through building her skill set, she was preparing herself for paid employment and learned the importance of hard work, follow through, and job accuracy.

It was apparent to Colleen's DVR counselor that her cheerful and friendly disposition would be a great benefit to an employer. As an avid marathon runner, Colleen also possessed the strengths of perseverance and a can-do attitude

Since she was ready for the job search, her DVR counselor introduced her to Justin Lord of Justin Lord Consulting (a Community Rehabilitation Program). They created a resume and applied to jobs. Almost immediately, Colleen was able to obtain employment through Fred Meyer as Parcel Clerk. Justin helped train her in the position and served as a communication bridge with the employer.

Since the job was part-time, Colleen was able to keep her SSI benefits and continue participation in community programs (All Aboard and YWCA) in her spare time. She was thrilled to get the job and the employer was thrilled to have such an enthusiastic employee!

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February 2017



Shane Licht had a gunshot wound that left him paralyzed and the need to use a wheel chair at the age of 12. Shane is a very bright and articulate young man who was able to complete his Bachelor's degree in Alaska as a customer of the Alaska DVR program. Shane then moved to Seattle and applied at the SeaTac DVR office in the summer of 2014.

Shane had no previous work experience, so I decided to try a Community Based Assessment (CBA) to see how things went, and while the Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) was setting up the CBA they made a connection with a self-employed business woman that was seeking to grow in conducting trainings, including QuickBooks type of work. We all discussed an On-the-Job Training (OJT) and the employer "Quick Source" hired him and we (DVR) provided 40 hours of OJT. Shane then continued his employment working 20 hours per week which could be done at home much of the time and was making \$25 an hour.

DVR was able to provide some required items such as a Surface Pro, some software, headset, and other rehabilitation technology to allow him to

communicate and work from whatever location he was required to be.

Shane was always a pleasure to work with and did a lot of the research work to find the detailed items that he and his employer felt would work best for his employment.

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March 2017



Antonio Cordova Marlene Swarts, Central Seattle DVR

When Antonio walked through DVR's doors he wanted what many people take for granted, a job. In spite of not be employed for over 20 years, being a survivor of a life threatening illness, having vision/hearing loss, severe chronic pain, brittle bone and chronic fatigue Antonio Cordova had not only dreams and hopes but the motivation and drive to be successful. After one meeting with Antonio it was clear he was going to be successful. He is very personable, relates well to others, is quick to praise and express his appreciation for other, characteristics that any employer values.

One justifiable fear that Antonio had in regards to returning to employment was jeopardizing his much-needed Social Security/Medicare benefits. DVR, recognizing these fears of many of our customers' years ago, created positions and training opportunities for DVR staff to understand the regulations and work incentive programs that Social Security offers in order to alleviate these fears. Through benefits counseling provided by Jennifer Bean, Benefit Specialist, Antonio was able to alleviate these fears and move forward with his employment search.

The next step with Antonio was an informational interview conducted by Sarah Rothman, Diversity Business Partner (now director), through the Northwest Center Amazon project. Sarah was impressed with Antonio and immediately thought

of a potential catering position she was developing with Bon Appetit whom provides catering to Amazon. Antonio interviewed in February of 2016 and started a month later in March or 2016. Four months later at a company meeting Antonio received an award where he was told the award was for "best platter person Bon Appetit has ever had! Maria says "she wishes she had 7 Of you!"

Antonio says, "My coworkers are very nice, helpful and cheery. They sing and dance throughout the kitchen", and "Work is going so fantastic, I'm training new employees now! Bon Appetite personnel depend on me very much, and said that I never fail them. We now have a new kitchen located underneath the three Metro globes that opens in February! Both kitchens were fighting over me! It was such a good feeling. Who wouldn't want to go to work and get such praise?"

Sarah has reported that the employer really enjoys having Antonio as their employee, and values him highly. They are asking for more candidates based on their experience with Antonio.

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April 2017



Transition Services

With the advent of new federal rehabilitation direction to help students with disabilities gain an early start at preparing to enter the world of work, transition services for high school/ secondary students with disabilities across the nation are in the process of changing in innovative and exciting ways. One significant new mandate for public vocational rehabilitation agencies is to make pre-employment transition services available to all students with disabilities. These services are a new set of tools DVR can

use in coordination with what schools are already providing in order to strengthen student transition. These pre-employment services focus on activities to help students explore careers, gain information about post-secondary programs in higher education, learn work readiness and self-advocacy skills, and participate in work-based learning activities. In 2017, DVR will be continuing to build services and launch new transition projects to help build better futures for students with disabilities.

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May 2017



Asher grew up knowing that he wanted to be an entrepreneur like his father. However, he got involved with wrong group of friends, got in trouble and consequently dropped out of school.

His father contacted me to ask about DVR services and made an appointment for an intake for the two of them. Asher is diagnosed with OCD and anxiety. Asher was very polite and seemed highly motivated to get a college education leading to owning his own business.

I provided counseling and guidance on high school completion programs. Asher selected Bellevue College because it provided a combined high school diploma and AA degree program at no cost. He also felt that a high school diploma would be an advantage when he applied to a four year institution.

Asher went to school full time and worked delivering pizza and at Dick's Sporting Goods. He lived with his mother and helped pay rent and groceries.

After he received his AA degree, he applied to several four year institutions. He was accepted to all of them. Initially, he wanted to go out of state. After

conversations regarding the benefits of attending the UW, he changed his mind.

Money was tight and he needed a place to live. My Rehabilitation Technician, Pam Flodine, suggested a fraternity and was able to share with him the benefits. He eventually realized that he would save money and it was a good networking community. He pledged the same fraternity as Pam's son.

Asher was the model DVR customer. He had excellent grades, was polite when interacting with our staff, and contacted me often for advice and information needed to support his services. He was always thankful. DVR staff looked forward to his visits and assisting with his DVR services.

After a year, I suggested that he apply to the prestigious Foster School of Business at the UW. He was unsure if he would be admitted. I explained that he was almost a 4.0 student and a quality business education is one of the most useful degrees today. The Foster School of Business Undergraduate Program is one of the best in the country. He applied and was accepted.

In his senior year he was provided with a paid internship at Corner Stone Advisor Inc. which turned into a permanent position.

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June 2017



Daniel participated in the School To Work program in his last year of an Adult Transition Program (ATP) called "VOICE" (Vocational Opportunities In Community Engagement) in the Edmonds School District. VOICE allowed Daniel to develop an employment team that provided services to aid him with gaining employment as he graduates from secondary education. The services started with Daniel and his team processing an assessment of his skills in school-provided internships, and continued all the way to gaining and maintaining employment.

Daniel's team included a robust group of professionals and family. The team included his Edmonds School District staff (Teachers, Para-educators, Audiologist, and Occupational Therapist) that all helped coordinate his education and provided a video resume he could independently share with employers. An employment specialist from Provail helped process working assessments, develop employment opportunities, and assisted Daniel with mastering the tasks of the job. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) & Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) provided Daniel with a Vocational Counselor, DD-Case Manager, and the Snohomish County Transition Coordinator. DDA also funded Daniel's Person Centered Planner and Benefits Planner services. His guardians/parents attended all of the team's meetings, and his mother supports the Edmonds School District by participating in the Special-education Parent

Teacher Associate (SPTA) and is a partner on committee groups.

Daniel's last year with the VOICE program was full of successes. He continued his activities with the Special Olympics (bowling, basketball, and soccer), with his musical outlets, doing presentations with his teachers at local transition conferences, and volunteering for his community. In January 2016, Daniel was selected as one of the "Students of the Month" for the entire Edmonds School District. Daniel enjoys his part time job working as a retail sales representative, and looks forward to future opportunities to work in the music industry. Daniel's team and friends describe him as friendly, enjoyable to be around, and all around awesome!

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Tara Ogg came to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in May 2015 to get assistance to become certified as a nail instructor. Tara had two strokes in 2003, wasn't receiving any state or federal assistance, and her husband had recently had surgery so he wasn't able to work. She needed to go back to work to help support her family.

Tara had experience as a nail technician and business owner and was interested in becoming an instructor. Tara contacted Elite Academy and learned that she would need 500 hours of Instructor training as well as the Master Esthetics Training. She worked with VRC Mike Cunningham to write an Individualized Plan for Employment for DVR. The Individualized Plan for Employment included assistance with tuition, tools and equipment, work clothing, the required licenses and certifications to become employed as an instructor as well as a laptop computer with software. Shortly after beginning the training, and because she was doing such a good job in the program, Elite indicated that they would hire her upon completion of the course work which they subsequently did.

During the course of the training at Elite, Tara required some additional computer training in order to successfully utilize the laptop computer for

the coursework as well as the software for management of student grades, attendance, etc.

Tara loves her job working as an instructor at Elite Academy in Yakima, WA and really appreciates the assistance that she received from DVR. VRC Mike Cunningham said that it was a pleasure assisting Tara. She was motivated and worked very hard to achieve her goals.

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August 2017



Project Search

"Life changing!" That was the recent testimonial of a parent of a student receiving an amazing new opportunity in Snohomish County: Project SEARCH - Swedish Edmonds. A collaborative employment-focused transition model, Project SEARCH is an intensive internship program for young adults with disabilities that began at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in 1996. Project SEARCH now boasts well over 400 sites across the United States, as well as international sites in 11 different countries. Project SEARCH at Swedish Hospital in Edmonds is a partnership between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Snohomish County Developmental Disabilities, Work Opportunities,

the Edmonds School District transition program (VOICE), and Swedish Hospital Edmonds. Spurred by the idea of bringing Project SEARCH to Edmonds, long-time VOICE teacher Harley Hammond, gathered a committed leadership team of community partners who spent nearly a year bringing the program to life. Key to the program's success is the welcoming environment at host business – Swedish Hospital. In September of 2016, Project SEARCH at Swedish Edmonds began the school year with its first cohort of 12 students. Students participate in three different internships throughout the hospital during the academic year. This work includes sterile processing, grounds keeping, food service, Starbucks, labor and delivery, materials management, and much more. Only about halfway through their first internship cycle, students were already displaying immense and marked growth in social, interpersonal, and work skills. Some students even changed their career goals to reflect the new skills they are learning at Swedish! We look forward to seeing what the rest of this year has in store and witnessing the success these young adults will have in the future.

Photo (L-R): Ben Hammond (VOICE), David (Student Liaison), Raegan Fisher (Swedish Edmonds), Lindsay Piper & Jen Huard (Work Opportunities), Jim O'Brien (DVR), Susan Chriest (Snohomish County DD), Nicholas Michiels (DVR), Joy Lohnes (VOICE not pictured because she was talking to a student intern).

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September 2017



Tarrien Hodges is a wonderful example of what happens when various services and agencies work together towards a successful ending for an eager client.

When Tarrien came to DVR several years ago and said that he wanted to go to work, we all knew it wouldn't be easy—but then, getting a job never is. He has multiple disabilities that affect his learning, his speech and his mobility, and at age 22, he had never worked. He didn't know what he wanted to do or could do, but was willing to try, so a community based assessment (CBA) seemed like the place to start.

His grandfather/guardian had been in touch with Northwest Center, so we made arrangements for one of their employment consultants, Aneta Kalicka, to begin working on the CBA with Tarrien. She would find 3 simulated work settings, where he could see what he was able and not able do in a future job. After several months, he had done well enough that Aneta moved to job placement. He knew how to use the bus system, so he could work anywhere the buses went. Tarrien's DDA case manager was also part of the team, and offered advice and encouragement, and helped where she could.

Going to work often entails a change of lifestyle, and Aneta noticed that there were things that Tarrien and his grandfather needed to work on before Tarrien could be successful in a job. Setting up schedules, doing laundry,

making doctor and dentist appointments, attending to hygiene more carefully – all things that contribute to successful job placement. However, Tarrien had a disability which caused him to drool uncontrollably and it was a major barrier to employment. After a year of advocacy by all parties involved, this issue was resolved.

After 3 months of intensive job search with Aneta, Tarrien did an impressive interview and was hired by Able Services at Microsoft, as a day porter. Aneta continued to work with Tarrien at the job, coaching him not only on his work duties, but also on social and work appropriate behaviors.

He has had that job for a year, gets to Redmond on his own, and loves his job. He no longer needs to attend counseling, is excited to earn his own income, and has truly seen his life turn around.

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October 2017



Rhonda was born with cerebral palsy and epilepsy. In 2001 she had a seizure, fell and sustained a right hip fracture. Over the years she developed arthritis which caused her to limp and have ongoing pain. She developed glaucoma, experienced vision problems and difficulties with her speech.

Rhonda worked for years as an assistant secretary and loved her job, but was told she was making errors, began feeling "pushed out" and eventually quit. She applied for Social Security Disability just before coming to DVR in July 2015. She spent most of her savings and lost her employer provided healthcare. By the time Rhonda came to DVR she had one month left in her apartment and was still waiting to receive Social Security benefits. Fortunately, a family member offered her a place to live until she got a job. She eventually qualified for SSDI and remained determined to find a job.

Rhonda chose to do a Community Based Assessment (CBA) at Orion Manufacturing where she participated in the Contact Center/Office Skills Training Program. Orion rated her progress highly and encouraged her. Rhonda became anxious and emotional to the point that she wanted to quit. DVR offered ongoing support and advocacy to Rhonda throughout this difficult time. Rather than quit,

with the help of her CRP and VRC counselors, Rhonda was able to negotiate a more suitable transition in her training, brushed up on her computer skills and received data entry training. She was given the opportunity to practice her skills and received additional time to complete a QuickBooks tutorial.

Following Rhonda's successful CBA completion, she transitioned into working with Orion for Job Placement services. A month later Rhonda accepted a part time job as a receptionist at the Mill Ridge Village Retirement Center in Milton. DVR assisted Rhonda in obtaining professional work attire, and transportation assistance. Rhonda loves her job and works with a staff that has welcomed and embraced her. Although Rhonda met challenges along the way, she experienced a sense of empowerment from the support she received from DVR that encouraged her to advocate for her needs. This allowed Rhonda to take control and drive her progress toward her desired outcome.

Rhonda has been able to save enough money and recently moved into a newly constructed SHAG Apartment minutes from her work. She is independent once again, feeling more secure and confident than ever, while building a new life with a new support system and sense of purpose.

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November 2017



In June of 2016 Yadier was referred by his VRC to the DVR Central Seattle Business Specialist for assistance in finding a job better suited to him. Being new to DVR and the field, Yadier was the first Deaf individual that uses American Sign Language fluently, I have ever worked with. Yadier's friendly personality and positive attitude made working together very easy. I found myself learning a lot about our similarities and cultures. While working on Yadier's resume and gathering his employment history, skills and qualifications, he said "My dream is to work for Amazon. Could you help me find a job, working for Amazon?" Yadier was currently working in the laundry facility at the Paramount Hotel in Seattle, however he wanted a job he could be proud of. In June we submitted a referral to the Amazon Fulfillment Center in Kent through our Diversity Partners at Northwest Center and arranged a simulation interview with a scheduled interpreter. With great communication and collaboration efforts Yadier was well prepared for his interview. I knew the company was looking for team oriented candidates with friendly personalities and strong work ethics and Yadier matched that description. Yadier's disability did not seem to be a barrier or a concern to the employer. Our partners from Northwest Center made the process easy and communicated with DVR about concerns, questions and updates. Yadier was offered a permanent part-time position at the Amazon Sort Center Warehouse as a Fulfillment Associate.

Yadier has been successfully employed at Amazon since September of 2016 and we continue to receive great feedback from our partners. We often receive notes about Yadier's progress - meeting and exceeding employer's expectations, accepting higher responsibilities and continuing to show great attitude and work ethic. Yadier has been constantly sharing his gratitude for the opportunity to work in such an inclusive environment. In addition, the Amazon Team has been trained on how to work with the Deaf population.

Diversity and inclusion make a great success story that covers our abilities, cultures, recruiting and leadership styles and practices. Opening to our differences and finding similarities enables us to understand our critical value as a way to learn, share, develop and celebrate together.

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December 2017



DVR State Plan: Goals and Priorities

As a core workforce development program, DVR's goals align the vision and strategic priorities outlined in Washington's Combined State Plan, *Talent and Prosperity for All: The Strategic Plan for Unlocking Washington's Workforce Potential.* This alignment realizes both the letter and intent of the Workforce

Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), to implement a coordinated service delivery system which supports the long-term labor market engagement of individuals with disabilities while providing business engagement services which promote economic prosperity.

Goal One: Improve Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Disabilities

Goal Two: Improve the Quality of Customer Services

Goal Three: Establish DSHS/DVR's Role in the Workforce Development System

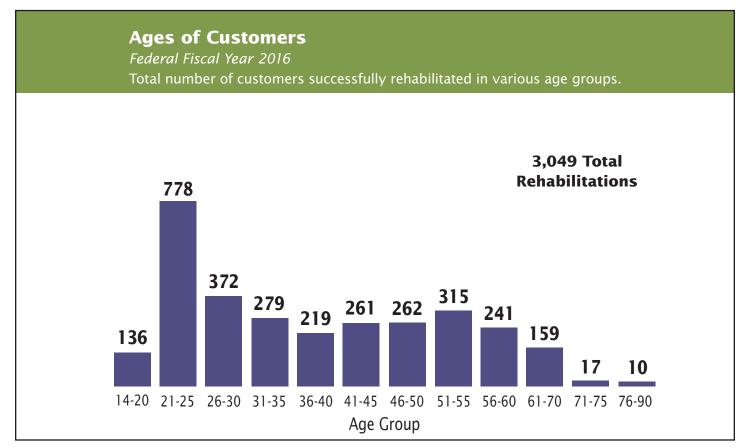
Goal Four: Improve DSHS/DVR's Systems and Performance

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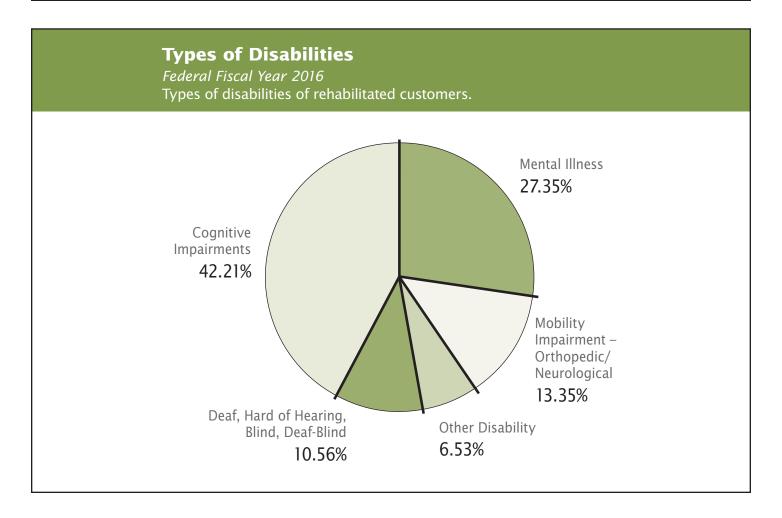
DVR Annual Report 2016







Case Service Expenditures Federal Fiscal Year 2016 Training 15% Placement Transportation Services 3% 42% **IL Services** 1% Assessment Services 26% Other Physical/Mental 11% Restoration/Rehab Tech 2%



DSHS MISSION

To transform lives.

Acknowledgements

In deep appreciation to all DVR staff for the work you do every day and your heartfelt dedication to making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. Special thank you to the DVR Staff who contributed customers' success stories and ideas to this year's annual report.

Non-Discrimination

No person, because of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, or disability shall be discriminated against in employment, services, or any aspect of the program's activities. This policy is consistent with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended in 1972, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1967, Executive Order 11246 as amended by Executive Order 11375, the Civil Rights Act of 1992, Governor's Executive Order 93-07, and the Washington State Law Against Discrimination, Chapter 49.60 RCW.

2016 DVR Annual Report

To request this publication in alternate format, please contact a Customer Service Representative at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

DVR can be reached at 1-800-637-5627. This publication is also available on our website at www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/division-vocational-rehabilitation.

This annual report was coordinated by DVR staff Rayanne Mueller.

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